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CHILDREN OF GLOBAL MIGRATION **Transnational Families and Gendered Woes**

By Rhacel Salazar Parreñas

“In her earlier important work, *Servants of Globalization*, Rhacel Parreñas described the extraordinary migration of Filipinas to care jobs in the North. In this book she turns to the children left behind. Through superb interviewing, Parreñas uncovers the poignant story of absent mothers, present but unaccommodating fathers, kin helpers, and children haunted by the feeling of being left behind. These children are, Parreñas shows us, the ‘fall guys’ of a powerful global logic far beyond their control. This is a brilliant book we all should read.”

—Arlie Hochschild,
co-editor with Barbara Ehrenreich of *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy* and author of *The Commercialization of Intimate Life*

“With an ethnographer’s ear and a social critic’s lens, Rhacel Salazar Parreñas illuminates the care deficit of the immigrant second generation, the children of transnational Filipino families left behind by mothers and fathers who labor in the global economy. Her uncovering of the gender paradox—the intensification of the gender division of labor, of male providers and female nurturers, despite women’s wage work—is nothing less than brilliant!”

—Eileen Boris,
Hull Professor of Women’s Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

An estimated 7.38 million Filipinos work and reside in 187 countries and destinations all over the world, constituting one of the largest groups of migrant laborers in the new global economy. Due to this, an estimated 9 million children (or roughly 10 percent of the Philippine population) are growing up without one or both of their parents.

In her previous book, *Servants of Globalization*, Rhacel Parreñas analyzed the pressures of globalization and gender inequalities on migrant Filipina domestic workers, focusing on two cities where they have the largest numbers, Rome and Los Angeles.

In a follow up to that award winning book, *Children of Global Migration* describes the formation and maintenance of transnational families in global restructuring, specifically the impact of family separation on the lives of the children of migrant domestic workers. A significant number of migrant Filipinos are mothers who migrate to provide for their children yet at the same time must leave these children behind in the Philippines.

Drawing on in-depth interviews, this ethnographic study looks at the social impacts of labor migration from the often-overlooked perspectives of the sending country. Parreñas examines the impact of distance on family intimacy in intergenerational relationships, and the constitution of gender norms that occurs in transnational households. How do the children left behind cope with the absence of one or both parents? And how are these children perceived in the Philippines, a country that puts a high value on the traditional nuclear family and conventional gender roles? Are the fathers left behind able to accept their migrant wives' status as family breadwinner, and are they successful in taking over their wives' former roles in the home?

Parreñas seeks answers to the problems that are inherent in global capitalism. The migration of women to better-paying jobs overseas has not resulted in changing the way the men back home view their place in the family, and the entire family suffers for that. The author finds that what is needed is for those parents left behind to give up traditional gender roles and find more creative ways to run a working household. As for the migrant workers themselves, they could be using their monetary capital to come together and form political clout, both in the Philippines and in their host countries. Their remittances, which benefit the entire Philippine economy, have the potential to influence the way migrant workers and their families are treated in the future.

Rhacel Salazar Parreñas is Associate Professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Davis. She is the author of *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work* (Stanford, 2001).

224 pp.	April 2005
\$19.95 (paper)	0-8047-4945-0
\$50.00 (cloth)	0-8047-4944-2

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Praise for *Servants of Globalization*—

“[Parrenas’s] nuanced accounts and fresh analysis challenge the reader to think deeply, not just about the suffering of immigrant domestic workers and their families, but about the entire global system that creates such labor, and how that arrangement damages all women—even first-worlders . . . Remarkable.”—*The Women’s Review of Books*

“*Servants of Globalization* is a wonderful but troubling book that is bound to impact future studies on migration, domestic work, and the family. . . . Overall, I strongly recommend this book. It is one of the few works that has dared to explore the dilemmas of the transnational family including the children.”—*Contemporary Sociology*

“*Servants of Globalization* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on gender and globalization. . . . This wide-ranging book yields substantial insights throughout and should be read by scholars, activists, and students interested in Asian American studies, women’s studies, sociology, anthropology, and international development.”—*American Journal of Sociology*

“Offers rich and timely analysis to reveal the lives of migrant domestic workers in the shadow of globalization. . . . Brilliant feminist sociological scholarship with theoretical sophistication, emotional sensitivity, and political commitment.”—*Work and Occupations*

“In all, this book brings to light many thought-provoking stories of anguish, resignation, and resistance . . . Parrenas’s study serves as an intrusive model for other scholars interested in undertaking this type of research.”—*Gender & Society*

“Parrenas’ well-documented and theoretically focused research reads easily as it reveals the complex nature of global migration. Her timely study of the Filipina domestic community brings overdue attention to one of the largest migrant communities in the world. . . . [*Servants of Globalization*] can be used for introductory courses in labor studies, women’s studies, or ethnicity in the United States.”—*Feminist Collections*

“*Servants of Globalization* is an ambitious, important, and broad-reaching study of the way in which the lives of Filipina domestic workers in Italy and the United States are affected by and interwoven with broader patterns of global capitalism and transnationalism. . . . A provocative, insightful, and moving study of gendered labor migration and globalization.”—*Journal of Asian American Studies*